

HCS HB 1050 -- VOLUNTEER HEALTH CARE SERVICES

SPONSOR: Franklin

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 9 to 1.

This bill expands the Volunteer Health Services Act to allow health care providers not affiliated with a sponsoring organization to register with their licensing boards before providing volunteer health care services to uninsured and underserved individuals. Such health care providers shall then be exempt from any action arising out of such treatment except for any act or omission that was the result of gross deviation from the ordinary standard of care or willful misconduct. The bill allows a health care professional to earn up to eight hours of continuing education credits for volunteer services provided, under these provisions, to eligible patients.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this would allow doctors, particularly specialists, not working for a registered exempt organization to get the same protections as sponsoring organizations under current law. This bill incentivizes doctors to volunteer their services.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Franklin; Missouri State Medical Association; Signature Medical Group; Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons; Missouri Academy of Family Physicians; and Gregg Pfizter, The Foundation for Government Accountability.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the bill gives doctors too much protection without any oversight. It is important that patients know that their health care provider is exempt from liability. It needs to be clear that the patient was informed prior to receiving treatment.

Testifying against the bill was the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys.